

DIRIGO FLYER

Vol. XI, No.2 February 2003

Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society
P.O. Box 2641, Bangor, Maine 04402 • 207-941-6757 • 1-877-280-MAHS (in state)
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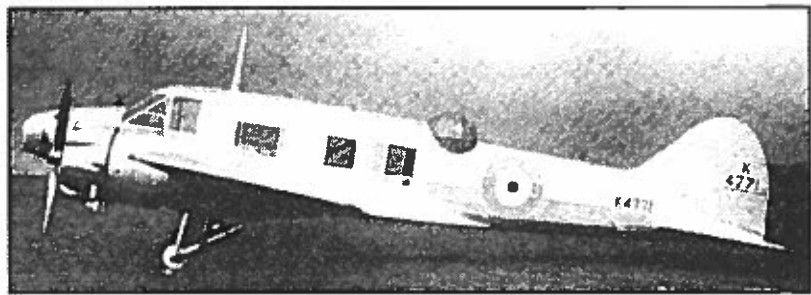
The Kebo Anson

By Jim Chichetto

In late 1941 America was not yet officially in World War II, but along the coast of Maine the war had become an everyday fact of life. Ships bound for England crowded Portland Harbor awaiting transit to Halifax, there to join either a fast or slow convoy to cross the Atlantic. The USN and other countries allied with or friendly to England patrolled the ocean off-shore, watching for the U-boats which were shadowing and sinking ships day and night. Aircraft were flying training missions over the Maine woods and along the shoreline to learn the skills needed to wage war and win the peace. In 1941 most of these aircraft were flown by young men who were from all over the British Empire and the free world. The core of pilots England had in pre-war days was gone, lost in the Battle of Britain. A new group of flyers needed to learn their trade to replace the losses and build up the forces for the coming offensive war effort. It is in this timeframe our story falls, an interesting but true tale of the Maine coast and a wayward aircraft flying and landing in Bar Harbor on October 24, 1941.

The aircraft was an Avro Anson, an aircraft already old when the war started in 1939. Designed as a general reconnaissance patrol aircraft with its retractable main gear, this was a "hot" aircraft capable of going 155 mph when the main gear was cranked up (140 turns by hand crank), and the stripped down version could hit 180 mph. A 125 mph cruising speed made it a fun aircraft for going base to base, and every squadron that could had one for the staff to use.

The airframe was of mixed construction. The wings and tailplane were made of Bakelite treated plywood. The fuselage and fin were welded steel with fabric covering. Powered by two 350 hp Armstrong seven-cylinder air-cooled engines, this was a stable flying platform. During its early days, the Anson was fitted out as a light bomber/armed recon aircraft. A fixed Vickers machine gun in the nose and a single Lewis gun in a rear turret were its only defensive arms. It could carry two 100 lb. bombs or eight 20 lb. bombs under its wings. A search light was added for night work. When war broke out it was used early for patrol, but quickly was replaced by faster aircraft with better payloads, speed and range. It became a trainer,



Avro 652A prototype of the Avro Anson. (Crown copyright reserved.)

used to train multi-engine pilots in the basics of flying and cross country navigation. It made an excellent squadron hack and was in use wherever the RAF had a base. A factory in Canada, Federal Aircraft, built a version used for training.

As its mission changed, the airframe became more specialized. The rear turret was deleted and more radio and navigation gear was added to better train the crews. Factories turned out more of these aircraft as the war progressed and training squadrons were set up in Canada to train replacement pilots for both the ETO and the war with Japan. Production carried on until 1952 with 11,020 of this type built. Thousands of aircrews trained in this type and then went on to fly bombers and other types of multi-engine aircraft. Few Ansons are left flying today, but in its day it was much like the DC-3: everywhere doing whatever was needed to win the war.

Formation flights of these aircraft criss-crossed Maine day and night, honing the flying skills of the crew and teaching the lessons needed to survive flight in bad weather, night and combat flying. Other Ansons flew these same types of missions, but out over the Atlantic, training to hunt subs and provide convoy air support. When the war started, the lack of patrol planes gave the Ansons some actual combat missions, but the lack of firepower, speed, etc. soon caused the Ansons to be used for off-shore patrol only. Land based targets were well defended and the Anson was an easy target for any fighter that spotted it. Flying out of bases in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, Ansons flew anti-sub training missions along the ship routes from Cape Cod to Halifax. Some were armed with

"Kebo Anson," continued on page 4

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 web site: acadia.net/mahs/
 telephone: 207-941-6757
 1-877-280-MAHS (in state only)

ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

President

Peter Noddin (#295)
 East Millinocket, ME 04430
 207-746-5166
 e-mail: petef86a@midmaine.com

Vice President

Leslie Shaw (#331L)
 Brewer, ME 04412
 207-989-4168
 e-mail: les_shaw@unit.me.edu

Recording Secretary

William Townsend (#101L)
 Bar Harbor, ME 04609
 207-288-5654
 e-mail: townsend@acadia.net

Treasurer

Joseph Quinn (#377)
 Levant, ME 04456
 207-884-7188
 e-mail: jwquinn@adelphia.net

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Monthly meetings
 are held at 10 a.m.
 on the second Saturday
 of each month
 at various locations.

See calendar for details.

Maine Aviation Historical Society

Monthly Meeting • Saturday, January 11, 2003

January Meeting Notes

The January meeting of the MAHS was held on Saturday the 11th at the Maine Air Museum in Bangor. Despite the cold, more than 25 members braved the weather to attend this meeting. After outgoing President Les Shaw opened the meeting and introduced the members and guests, he announced the results of the election. Peter Noddin will be President, and Les Shaw will be Vice President, Volunteer Coordinator and Groundskeeper. Bill Townsend and Joe Quinn were re-elected as Secretary and Treasurer. Leo Boyle, Al Cormier, Carl Sederquist and Mike Cornett were re-elected to serve on the Board of Directors. Mike Cornett reluctantly resigned from the Board for personal reasons, but will continue to give as much as he can. Great thanks were given to Mike as all present knew how responsible he was for our having come as far as we have.

Peter Noddin gave us a very exciting picture of his vision for the coming year (see President's Message on page 3), culminating in our planned Grand Opening on Flag Day, June 14, 2003. Needless to say, there is much to be done before then, and afterwards, so come join the fun. Call or write to Les Shaw telling him when you can be available and let him schedule you in. Mike told us about the WAC WWII uniform and display mannequin donated by Peg Redman. Hank Marois, unexpectedly in from Florida, told us about the 42nd Bomb Wing display which they are building and which will be ready next summer. Ed Armstrong talked about the photos and memorabilia from the Pilot's Grill, which we will be getting this spring. Pete Noddin talked about hikes to crash sites and how we hoped to be doing more of them this year. The first hike will be to the F-84B crash site in Amherst, with the newly found T-33 site being second on the list. To cap it all off, Rick Alexander gave another of his fantastic slide shows, this one on trips to Shearwater and other Eastern Canadian museums.

We're looking forward to an exciting, greater year in 2003, so climb aboard for a great ride. Sign up to volunteer and be a part of it all. See you at the next meeting!

Next Meeting, February 8, 2003

The February meeting of the MAHS will be held at the Millinocket Municipal Airport on Saturday, February 8th at 10 a.m. After the membership meeting, Bernard Staples will speak on his experiences participating in the search and rescue operation for the B-18 crash in Lee in 1941, as well as his military service training as a fighter pilot and serving as a B-29 Flight Engineer.

Directions: Take I-95 to Exit 56 (Medway/Millinocket), head west to Millinocket (12 miles). Turn left at traffic light (by McDonald's) and drive to stop sign. Turn left. Airport is on left.



In Memoriam ... C. Peter Blouin

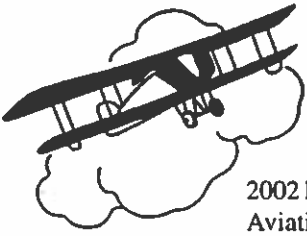


Manchester, NH — C. Peter Blouin, 77, died quietly Thursday, January 2, 2003, at his home on Cobbossee Lake. He was born in Augusta, Maine, February 12, 1925, the son of Calix and Mimi Blouin.

While attending Staunton Military Academy, he enlisted in the Marine Corps, in which, as a sergeant, he served as a night fighter radar operator for Squadron 521 on Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands, and other Pacific islands. He was a rifle marksman and a sharpshooter. Following his service for his country, he returned to SMA and graduated. He attended the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.

Peter Blouin was owner of Blouin Motors, a Chrysler/Plymouth/Dodge dealership in Augusta, for almost 50 years. His many longtime, faithful employees enabled him to pursue his longtime love of flying. He learned to fly under the GI Bill at the Maine Instrument Flight School in 1947. He became a captain for Northeast Airlines and later Delta Airlines. After 32 years of flying, he retired as a captain of an L1011 jumbo jet based in Miami. Appointed by Gov. John Reed, he was chairman of the Maine Aeronautics Commission and was responsible for the expansion of the Portland International Jetport.

Peter Blouin was a member of the Maine Aviation Historical Society and will be sadly missed by all.



MAHS President's Message, January 2003

2002 has been a landmark year for the Maine Aviation Historical Society. The Maine Air Museum opened for a season and exposed many visitors to Maine's aviation heritage. For many of you, this is a milestone reached from your dreams years before I even became a member of this society. The museum, as humble a start as it may seem, has told the people, shown the people of Maine two important aspects of our society. First, that we are serious about what we are doing and are more than a social organization. Second, that Maine in fact *has* an aviation heritage that we can be proud of and need to preserve for future generations.

This has not come without great sacrifice on the part of some of our members. I cannot express enough my respect and gratitude for the many who served to make this happen, and the few in the "core group" who bore the burden of week to week operations.

My intended strategy for MAHS in 2003 is simple and based on four "M's" — Membership, Main Purpose, Museum, and Money.

Membership is a critical challenge that we are facing. Our numbers are down and the financial and operational needs of the society are tied directly to dues collection. I intend to have some meetings away from Bangor, with interesting programs and advanced publicity to help recruit new members, and give our existing members more interest for their dues dollar. I would also like to see more interesting events like hikes, theme days, memorial/national register projects, and visible MAHS presence at other Maine aviation history related events.

Most importantly, I hope to regain the vision as a body that this is supposed to be fun! Maine's aviation history does not belong to us, we have simply appointed ourselves to be its custodians. We all have different interests and experiences within this broad spectrum of Maine history. I realize that standards of quality and conduct need to be set by our leadership to avoid chaos and to have things done with some order, but I hope to create an environment where members can more freely express their interests and participate within them. We need to avoid bickering and counterproductive behavior at all costs. Did I mention that this hobby is supposed to be fun? I would like to see this manifest itself in more individual and small group projects focusing on interesting aspects of Maine aviation history, both within the walls of this museum and out in publications and speaking/display presentations.

Our **Main Purpose** is to be a historical society: to collect, preserve, discuss, and present to the public our aviation heritage. On this note, my vision includes an updated master list of historic eras, milestone events, and aviation related sites in

Maine. This will allow good historical research and preservation priorities to emerge. Which areas are least understood/remembered? Which sites, artifacts, and written/oral historical materials are most threatened with the passage of time? I would hope that this would give way to opportunities for members to participate in our society in more diverse ways. This could enhance/support the museum effort with more publication, news coverage, and a platform speakers group to expand upon the fine work that several of you have been doing in our schools and civic organizations.

The **Museum** will continue to be our most visible and most challenging effort to preserve and communicate our aviation heritage. To open for the season this year, we will need more individuals to volunteer a little time and effort, as opposed to a few trying to do it all alone. The Volunteer Coordinator will be a key leader in this area, and we will be asking for commitments to be scheduled well ahead to ensure that the museum can open. Week to week simply will not work long term.

We need to strive to slowly, steadily improve our displays and attractions. We need to set some reasonable guidelines for space and quality and give motivated members room to express themselves with display and interpretation projects. Our aviation history is simply too diverse for this to conform to one individual's vision.

Finally, I cannot talk about success and future growth without the "M" that isn't popular to talk about in any organization: **Money**. The first three "M's" should help us with modest operating funds and small donations. The brick walk effort is a good example of garnering support now that we have shown that we are serious. A large scale fundraising effort, however, is going to be needed if we are to have the first class museum that most of us envision. Here again, this will take volunteers with a willingness to serve in this capacity. Fundraising is a volume operation and takes an assertiveness to face rejection without sensitivity and a resolve to keep looking for potential benefactors and making contacts anyway.

In summary, our continued success in 2003 depends on you. Some will need to be carpenters, groundskeepers, and restorers. Some will need to be interpreters, tour guides, and security guards. Some will need to be researchers, writers, speakers, explorers, and organizers. Some will need to be money seekers and handlers. Some will have vision beyond our abilities and some will have the opposite, but there needs to be all of the above working together and tolerant of each other to make this happen.

Oh, and did I mention that this is a hobby and supposed to be fun???

Peter Noddin
President

Join the MAHS Today → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → →
→ → → → → → → → → **Save Maine's Aviation History for Tomorrow**

"Kebo Anson," continued from page 1

bombs, many were not, but to a U-boat all were deadly eyes in the sky to be avoided at all costs. This is a story about the end of one such training patrol flight.

Kebo Valley Golf Course is a beautiful course of golf links at the edge of Acadia National Park and downtown Bar Harbor, a nice one which has seen the rich, powerful and common man struggle with the game of golf for decades. The clubhouse also serve as a gathering for many community events. On the day in question, the Shrine was having a day long meeting and later a supper and dance.

Our story takes place as dusk is falling. The clubhouse is full of folks who have just finished supper and are enjoying cocktails and getting ready for the evening's dancing. After a day of fun, food and drinks, things were just really getting going when an aircraft flew low overhead. When it returned, folks started to listen and go outside to see what was going on in the evening sky. It's not uncommon, due to the airport in Trenton a few miles away, to have aircraft overhead, but after dark most flying was just aircraft in transit.

It was getting darker by the minute and someone on the ground thought maybe the plane is lost. Due to the mountains on Mt. Desert Island, the runway at Trenton might not be visible in the dusk and the aircraft may be looking for somewhere else to land. Flares fired out of the aircraft light up the sky and ground. The pilot seems to be trying to decide where to land. A few guests started up their autos and drove them down to the fairway that the aircraft kept buzzing. They parked the autos so the lights shone on the fairway in a manner to provide a lighted path for landing.

Finally, the aircraft comes in low and slow with the main gear down and the engines barely turning the propellers. The aircraft touched down and started its roll-out. It was still moving briskly when the pilot sees he is running out of room to stop on the fairway. He is heading for a drop-off which is lined with huge pine trees. To hit one of those would be the end of them all. He pulled hard on the controls and the aircraft starts to turn a little, and rolls right into a sand bunker. The result is a sudden stop as the main gear folds under when it hits the back-side of the bunker. The propellers bend and both engines are

stopped as the aircraft slides forward on its belly to a stop short of the drop-off and trees. There is a sudden quiet in the night as the aircraft comes to rest. There is no fire. The sudden silence only lasts for a few seconds.

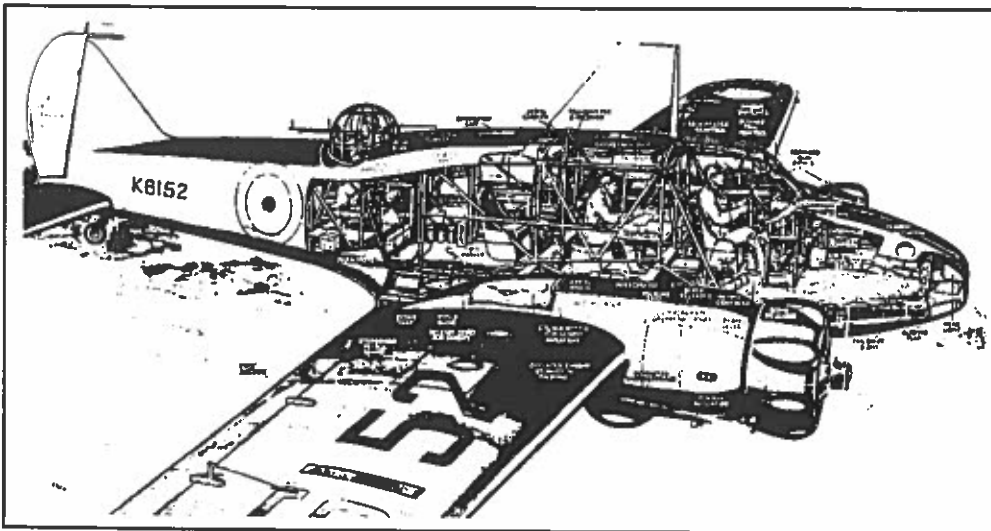
Back up the fairway the crowd has been spellbound watching this forced landing unfold and suddenly it surges forward to get a closer look. As it happens, the Abbott brothers are all in the Shrine and they are also Aux police officers of Bar Harbor. They even have the Black Maria, the paddy wagon, at the clubhouse this evening since one of them is on call. They quickly jump into the paddy wagon and go roaring down the fairway to the aircraft. It's been a hot day and drinks have been served all day and then with the dinner. Not everyone is sober and when they stop, the rush out of the paddy wagon would have done the Keystone Cops proud.

Wearing their distinctive red caps of the Shrine, they walk and make their way toward the damaged aircraft. As they stumble up the crew is crawling out of the wreckage looking worse for the landing, but no one was seriously hurt. The pilot, seeing a group of red capped folks coming toward him, has the thought he has somehow landed in Turkey. He knows it can't be true, but they are walking strangely, talking funny and seem as confused as he is. Once they get side by side, language is better understood and the pilot asks where he has landed. He is told Bar Harbor, Maine. He then finds out that these are the local authorities and plans are made for his Squadron to be notified where he is and the condition of the crew and aircraft. Leaving some officers to guard the plane, the rest take the crew to the clubhouse where food, drinks and fellowship are enjoyed while the local, state and Canadian bases are all contacted. Stories and hats are traded and the crew had a good time until the military showed up to take over the crash site.

USAAF troops from Dow Field in Bangor arrive. The US was unprepared for WWII and the soldiers were dressed in the old style 1918 uniforms and equipment that was our state of the art equipment back then. A rope line was run around the aircraft and guards were posted. Civilians were shoed away and kept at a distance. Plans were made for recovery. The crew was packed off for debriefing and transport back to Canada.

Things settled down in Bar Harbor, and people went home after the evening's excitement.

The word went out like a wildfire and everyone in Bar Harbor was talking about the airplane crash the next morning. Jimmy Thompson was about eight years old when he and a couple other boys hiked the hill behind the golf course and cut through the pine trees to see the plane. It was big and after looking around they decided to crawl inside and check it out. The soldier on guard was facing the clubhouse and watching the fairway to keep folks away. He heard the noise in the aircraft



Avro Anson cutaway showing the layout of the aircraft.

made by the kids and approached it looking for German spies or looters. What he found were kids poking around and playing pilot. He ordered them out and read them the riot act. He explained he could shoot them on sight and pulled back the bolt of his 1906 Springfield and showed them the live round in the chamber. With his WWI style tin hat and the loaded rifle, they were properly scared and left the way they came when he allowed them to get out.

They were the first of many kids who made the hike to view this aircraft. Skip Dunton was a young boy who made the trip to view the bomber. The current postmaster of Salsbury Cove saw the aircraft as it sat resting on the grass. At the time, he knew that the English were fighting the Germans, but couldn't figure out why they were bombing us here.

Tales of bombs dropping near Bar Harbor still exist today. Some say the mission was an armed training mission and the crew were looking for U-boats when they got lost. Others say they flew out to sea from Kebo and jettisoned their bombs before making the landing. Only the RN knows for sure, but the stories are interesting. They did jettison flares to light the area and that may have been the objects the folks saw.

In many cases in Maine, the USAAF, USN, and USAF have told the news media the crashed aircraft was on an unarmed training mission, but research later finds shells, air-to-ground rockets, and air-to-air missiles at many WWII and Cold War crash sites. The policy of keeping a lid on any facts like that started in WWII and goes on to this day. Like so much else they will not admit to the plane being armed even as they demand you given them back the 2.5ff Mighty Mouse rocket

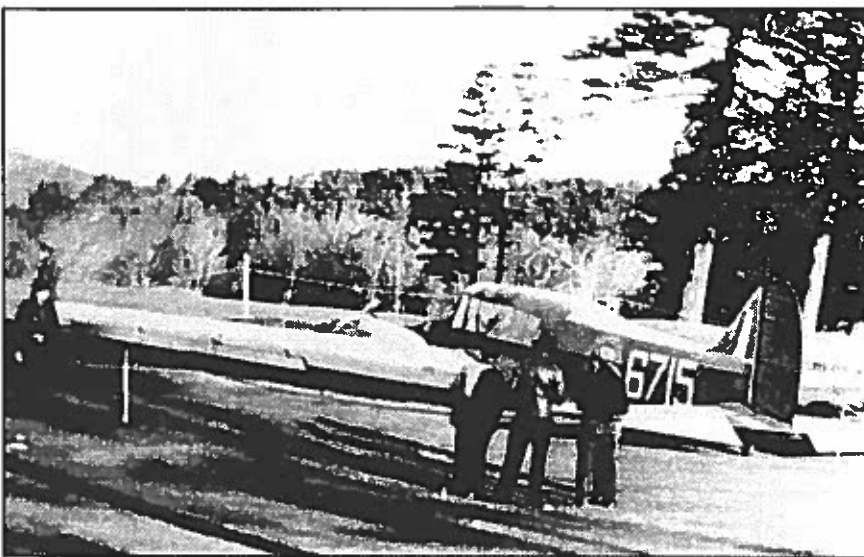
you found at a crash site. And they do that with a straight face and the power of the law behind them. Like the K-14 off Mt. Desert Rock, what this Anson was or wasn't carrying for weapons may never be known.

A few days later Skip was standing in his yard on Rt. 3 in Salsbury Cove when a group of flatbed Army trucks hauling the Anson came by. A second truck had the wings and other parts. Other equipment used to pick up and move the damaged aircraft followed as the Army did the recovery and transport. The Army had sent a crew who jacked the wreck up, took off the wings and broken landing gear, and loaded everything for transport back to Dow Field. At Dow, a crew of mechanics rebuilt the aircraft and it was flown off to its home base later. What finally happened to the aircraft is not known at this time, but most likely it was sold for scrap when the war ended and passed off into history like so many other warbirds.

What happened to the crew after their training, I don't know. I do know that the crew returned on at least two flights to buzz Bar Harbor and the golf course. They beat up the town in a fashion that would have done a WWI ace proud. Each time they would head back out to sea. Today there are a few items in Bar Harbor which have links to the event. The pilot traded his service hat for a Shrine hat with one of the Abbott brothers. Somewhere packed away during a house move this hat is still

waiting to be rediscovered.

The Bar Harbor Historical Society has a photo of the aircraft sitting on the fairway at Kebo. I was given a copy of it by the late Gladys O'Neil. She was quick to point out that she and two other 18 year old girls had gone to see the plane. She pointed to a figure in the picture and told me, "I didn't know it at the time, but this man was to become my husband." It was the first time she could remember ever seeing him. History does take some interesting twists and that makes it so interesting to study and research. The stories and photos from 60 years ago still hint at how active the Bar Harbor area was in the war effort and the role it played in coastal defense and Allied flight training.



The RCAF Avro Anson which made a forced landing at the Kebo Golf Course in October 1941.
(Courtesy of Bar Harbor Historical Society)

For additional information about this event or other aircraft related events in Maine, you can contact the Maine Aviation Historical Society at P.O. Box 2641, Bangor, Maine 04402 or you can log on to the web site at: acadia.net/mahs/

Credits and Sources

Personal Interviews

Jimmy Thompson of Route 3, Bar Harbor, Maine
Skip Dunton of Salsbury Cove, Bar Harbor, Maine
Art Abbott of Seal Cove, Maine
Gladys O'Neil (plus copy of a photo from the collection of the Bar Harbor Historical Society)

Additional Research

Date on the Anson type, photos and its deployments in war-time service from Jim Cogle, aircraft historian from Canada.
Cutaway Anson view from the book, Classic World War II Aircraft Cutaways by Bill Gunston, Osprey Pub., Oxford, UK.

Many Thanks

Thanks to the many other people I spoke with in Bar Harbor and around MDI during my research of this accident.
Jim Chichetto is a co-founder of the reformed MAHS and the Maine Air Museum located in Bangor, Maine. The goal of the MAHS is to document and save Maine's aviation history and to provide a place where visitors can do research and learn about this part of Maine's colorful history.

Buy a Brick and Support the Maine Air Museum

The Maine Air Museum is proud to announce the new Memorial Pathway Program. Here's how it works:

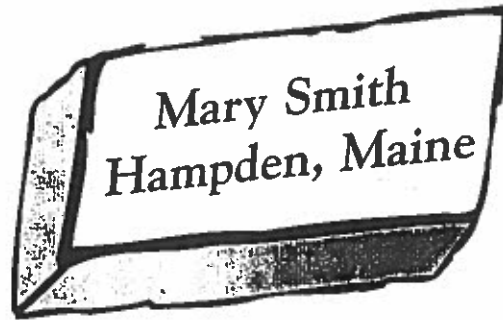
To successfully carry out and reach the museum vision, and to refurbish building 98, the Maine Air Museum needs the financial support of business and public community leaders and individual private citizens. Your interest in preserving the rich Maine aviation history will require funding presently not available to the museum effort. To this end, the museum board has established the following contribution plan for receiving your monetary donation and recognizing your gift permanently in the museum pathway and wall of honor. Remember: your donation is fully deductible.

★ Stratocumulus Member — \$100 Donation

Entitles the gift giver to a one-year membership and two-year museum pass and a benefactor's engraved 4"x8"x2.5" red clay brick with up to two lines (14 characters/line, .65" high) of commemorative text in the name of the gift giver or his/her memorial to others. Brick to be installed on the museum grounds, walkway or building facade.

★ Altostratus Member — \$150 Donation

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See Order Form on Page 7

★ Altocumulus Member — \$250 Donation

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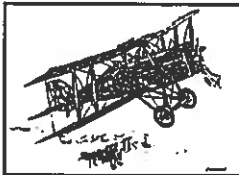
★ Cirrus Member — \$2500 Donation

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The Maine Air Museum is wholly owned and operated by the Maine Aviation Historical Society.

WWI AERO

1900
to
1919



SKYWAYS

1920
to
1940

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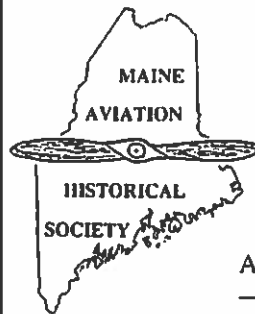
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Upcoming MAHS Meetings



- February 8 10 a.m. MAHS Meeting
- March 2 10 a.m. 6th Annual Gathering of Eagles, Owls Head Transportation Museum, Owls Head, Maine
Planning, Special Presentations, Refreshments, and Museum Tour by KV EAA 87 and MAA
- March 8 10 a.m. MAHS Meeting, Portland Area (TBA)
- March 20 1:30 p.m. Lecture on Flying Boats by Ian Marshall
Chapel, Unitarian Universalist Church, 121 Bucksport Road, Ellsworth, Maine

MAHS meeting sites and programs are flexible. Call Les Shaw at 1-877-280-MAHS if you have any ideas or if you can help.

Membership Update

E-Mail Listings

We Welcome ...

436. **Gordon D. Chafee**
155 Gallows Hill Road
Redding, CT 06896-1408

Don't forget to send us your e-mail address if you want it listed in the *Dirigo Flyer*. It's a great way to keep in touch with other members, share information quickly and stay current on aviation issues and happenings.

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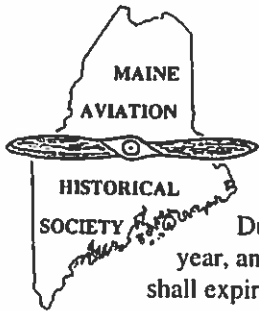
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February Meeting

February 8, 2003
10 a.m.

Millinocket Municipal Airport
Millinocket, Maine
(Directions on Page 2)